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TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PREL](#) [PO](#)  
SUBJECT: PORTUGAL SEEKS REPLACEMENT LEADER FOR COMMUNITY  
OF DEMOCRACIES WORKING GROUP

REF: LISBON 694

THIS IS AN ACTION REQUEST. PLEASE SEE PARA 4 FOR DETAILS.

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Portugal's announcement, as detailed reftel, that it would no longer lead the Community of Democracies (CD) Working Group (WG) on Regional and Interregional Cooperation for Democratic Governance is a disappointing development. Department understands the Portuguese are not to be dissuaded from this decision, will take a two-pronged approach from Washington and Lisbon to resolve this issue. Our main priority is to identify new WG leadership quickly so that Portugal may announce the change at the CD Convening Group meeting in Bamako March 28-29. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) While Portugal's decision to abdicate leadership of the CD WG on Regional and Interregional Cooperation for Democratic Governance is disappointing, particularly in light of Portugal's impending CD Chairmanship, the Department believes the swift transfer of leadership to be best for the WG to accomplish its objectives to implement one or two concrete democratic promotion projects prior to the November 2007 Bamako Ministerial. As co-chairs for the WG, Romania and Ukraine are the obvious choices to take over leadership of the WG. Given the continued shakeups in the Ukrainian MFA, Romania might be in a stronger position to lead at this time. The Department has no preference for a location for the WG to continue to meet, although the new leadership's diplomats in Lisbon already engaged may wish to continue with the project. The Department's greatest priority is that the new leader(s) quickly move forward with the development and implementation of concrete initiatives.

¶3. (SBU) The Department has identified a two-pronged approach to quickly move the WG beyond the leadership change to active initiative development. Under Secretary Dobriansky will take the opportunity to raise the situation in two meetings this week in Washington that had been previously arranged for unrelated matters. On Tuesday, March 20, Under Secretary Dobriansky met with Romanian Charge Daniela Gitman,

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during which she encouraged the Romanians to take a leadership role as Portugal transitions out of the WG Chairmanship. The Charge responded positively, and it appears the Romanians will position themselves to take over the WG leadership. On Wednesday, March 21, Under Secretary Dobriansky will meet with Portuguese Ambassador Joao de Vallera, during which she will encourage Portugal to support its co-chairs so that a smooth handover of responsibilities occurs. She will also encourage Portugal, as it prepares to take on the CD Chairmanship in late November, to remain engaged throughout 2007 in the deliberations of the Convening Group, the CD invitation process,

working groups, and the Permanent Secretariat.

14. (SBU) ACTION REQUEST: As both meetings occur prior to the response date Lisbon requested, Department requests post to reach out to the MFA as soon as possible, to gently urge the Portuguese to support a swift transition of power to the WG co-chairs. Department also requests post urge the Portuguese to maintain a close dialogue with CD Convening Group members to preclude confusion such as this in the future.

End Action Request.

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